

# Masterpiece

by Composer of Discord

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Summary: "You, Art, are my masterpiece; you will set us all free."  
Moral gives Art a minimum which he does not know how to control. In order to keep Nice safe he begins to distance himself only to cause pain to those he loves most. Nice/Art yaoi. Rating may go up in future chapters.

## 1. Chapter 1:Masterpiece

**\*\*Author's Note:** Wow it's been like 2 years since I published somethingâ€|Oh well, this was for procrastination from studying so I'm sorry if there are some spelling mistakes or anything like that, and I can't promise quick updates though I'll try. This takes place after the 8\*\*\*\*th\*\*\*\* episode and Art is alive, thank you very much!\*\*

**\*\*Disclaimer:** I do not own anything. This is only for fun and as a stress reliever. \*\*

**\*\*Warnings:** Rating may go up in the future, and yaoi which means boyxboy in other words, Nice/Art because I love them. Now onto the story!\*\*

### Chapter 1: Masterpiece

Bang! The sound of shoots fired ricocheted through his head, smashing against every dark crevice of his skull. He could not think but only feel the numbing pain against his side and yet his head felt like the actual ten pounds it was. He wanted to say something; he needed to say something. Anything though all that fell from his lips was a breathless cry.

'Pleaseâ€|someone help me.'

"Ah, you're awake, inspector. Sleep well?" The young man's head

turned all too fast to the direction of where the voice was apparently coming from. "Open your eyes, Art."

Recognizing the voice that called out to him, Art felt his body stiffen. Slowly, violet eyes blinked to life, half-mast as they looked up at the man before him, if you could even call him that. Even through his pain, his eyes narrowed at the figure, fingers bunching in the pristine sheets.

"M-Moralâ€|" his voice croaked before a few unwilling coughs tore through his lungs.

"Please, Art, don't strain yourself. Your brain needs time to set in." Moral reached down to rearrange Art's sheets, meticulously tucking them under the superintendent's body.

"Wh-what do you mean?" Violet eyes peered over at the man touching him, almost affectionately like one would for a loved pet of some sort. He wanted to recoil, to swiftly move away from the other's prying hands but alas he was too weak to do so.

"Oh look at you." Moral's hand came to brush a strand of pale lilac hair from Art's eyes only for the inspector to flinch from the hand, though Moral wouldn't let Art go. Not that easily. He gripped the other's chin between his thumb and forefinger, forcing those vexing eyes to look at him.

"Hm," a pensive hum warmed a smile to Moral's thin lips, "You truly are a work of art." Those violet eyes were no longer full of bitter rancor but only grew large like a deer caught in the headlights as he tried to pull back, but Moral's grip was unrelenting. He leaned closer to the superintendent, lips ghosting over Art's pale cheek until the young man could feel heated waves of air coat the outer shell of his ear.

"You, Art, are my masterpiece." Moral's fingers glided up to cup the man's cheek, thumb grazing softly over the skin, "You will set us all free."

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Dark cobalt eyes studied the man before him, mind racing faster than the speed of sound, and yet he felt like time was moving ever so slowly. Seconds turning to hours as his eyes would shift from Art to the clock.

'\_Pleaseâ€|wake up.'\_ His fist came to meet with his forehead lightly as if to dispel such thoughts, but all he could picture was Art lying somewhere while he was laughing obliviously with his friends. '\_I should have been thereâ€|I-why Art? Why did this happen? How could I have let this happen? I promisedâ€|'\_

Still, Art remained asleep, chest rising and falling in eight seconds â€" he counted â€" while numerous bandages were tightly wrapped around the pale torso and some around the other's head. He had read the report. A knife wound through the liver causing severe internal bleeding that would have taken a few hours to bleed to death, but of course the person did not stop there. Multiple gun shots taken to the chest. It was a miracle that Art had survived. It was said from a witness that the attacker had stabbed him first, and that was when

she had called for the police. It was only a minute after the gun fire that the ambulance arrived and able to reach Art in time. At least that was what the report had said and as far as anyone would tell him. Though there was no profiling of the attacker, only Art could tell him if only he would wake up.

"What do you mean we can't come in? You've gotta let us in."

"You do not need to worry, miss, I am a doctor."

"That's right! If anyone should see him, it's Ratio and me. Me being his partner and all."

"I brought foodâ€|"

"Nice?" the large group chorused together when they saw their friend standing at the door. The independent inspector came out into the hall, quietly closing the door behind him to keep the noise from disturbing Art. As much as he wanted to talk to him, he wanted the other to wake up on his own.

"He hasn't woken up yet." He reported to the group only for the nurse to look surprised that Nice had gotten into the room.

"H-How did you get in there? That's an unauthorized room." She glared accusingly at Nice before sighing after a moment out of sympathy, "I'm sorry, but I must ask all of you to leave. The patient is not strong enough to take visitors at the moment, but if you leave your number at the desk we can call you at more appropriate time to visit."

"I'm his brother. Family members are allowed." Nice had lied his way to get access to Art's room. Though the truth was, Art had no family. His brother had died five years ago while he hadn't talked to his parents since he and his brother were enrolled in Facultas Academy. His brother was all he had.

"Ohâ€|then I suppose it's okay." The nurse relented only to turn around in surprise at the rest of the group.

"Oh yeah, we're cousins." Ratio proclaimed.

Birthday nodded as he slung an arm around Ratio, "Yeah, twice removed."

"On his mother's side." Honey added.

"Um, miss, I'm sorry but you're not allowed to have pets in the hospital." The woman referred to Three in which everyone else had to pause to look at Three and then back at her only for her to sigh once more, though this time in exasperation. "Only close family members for now. The patient really can't be disturbed at the moment."

"We won't disturb him, honestly."

"We'll be as quiet as a mouse."

"Shhâ€|" Nice silenced them as he listened hard to the sound on the other side of the door. "His breathing changed." Without further ceremony, Nice reentered the room as the rest of the group followed

despite the nurse's attempt to keep them out.

Blue eyes were once more locked onto Art, hands gripping the bed rail tightly as he saw the small furrowing of pale brows and the slight twitching of fingers.

"Art?" Nice softly called out to him, grip tightening until the blood had rushed from his knuckles.

'Nice?' Art could barely register the other's voice let alone all the shouting he had heard moments before in the hall. 'Nice is here.' He thought pleasantly before another voice other than his own had pierced its way in.

'You will set us all free, even your beloved Nice.'

Heliotrope eyes shot open, alarming Nice as he sprang back a bit. Dark blue eyes blinked in momentary shock when Art's met his. For the first time he saw fear in them, complete fear

"You shouldn't be here." 'Please, you can't be here.'

The words struck Nice more than he thought they should. After the hours he had spent waiting for Art to awake, he did not imagine it to be this way. He had pictured a myriad of scenarios, but this was not one of them. He felt something bubble up inside his throat, but yet he bit his tongue from yelling, screaming what he wanted to.

"I—" His words died while his features changed in clear defeat. The look Nice gave him made Art want to take back his words, but he knew it was the right thing. It had to be.

"I'm sorry—" alas the guilt weighed too heavy on Art's tongue, "I just—I need to be alone at the moment." 'It's not safe to be around me.'

"Okay." Nice backed away slowly along with the other's that had partially been in the room. They had been stunned silent as they backed their way out as well to give Nice room to retreat. After all, if Art did not want to see Nice, then there was no chance that he would see them as well.

"Thank you." Art tried to offer a small smile but it turned broken since yelling at Nice was not something he was ever proud of. Nice nodded dejectedly in return before departing completely from the room.

Only when he could hear the sound of retreating feet did Art let his weak hand come to wipe away any tears that had started to form. He had yelled at his friend not only once but twice now. Even after however long Nice was there, he had yelled at him.

Art tried to convince himself that it was for Nice's own good. It was for his protection as he had sworn to do so the day he thought himself surely dead, and yet here he was. He could not decipher whether being alive was a good thing or not. After what Moral had done to him, there was little he could do to protect those he loved. He couldn't even protect himself.

His hand trembled at the thought, gripping the lilac bangs that was

strewn across his brow. \_'If I have a new minimum, then why do I feel so weak?' \_

TBCâ€|

A/N: Thanks for reading if you've gotten done this far, and I hope to update soon. Also, I apologize for any OCCness and if Moral sounded pervyâ€|yeah, so sorry for that. Anyway, thanks again for reading and hopefully see you guys soon! Night/Morning, and anything in between!

## 2. Chapter 2: Monster

**\*\*A/N:** That might be a record for updating stories. Normally it's three months or somethingâ€|Anyway, thanks for all those that read, reviewed, faved, and placed this on your alert. I hope I don't disappoint you with this chapter.**\*\***

**\*\*Chapter 2: Monster\*\***

"Cheer up, Nice." Blue eyes shifted from the surface of the table up to the cafÃ© owner, though he could not bring himself to do more. His chin remained resting upon his folded arms while his features remained reserved.

Hajime, as her best effort, pushed her plate of curry to Nice and extended her hand with her fork. After all, before hamatora expanded to what it was today, it used to be just the two of them eating large bowls of curry and solving cases together.

"Eat." She softly commanded, though Nice did not budge, even at the small poking of the fork against his arm.

"I'm not hungry, Hajimeâ€|sorry." Nice turned away from her while her own features fell to what seemed to be Nice's infectious disease of inundating gloom.

It had only been a few days since the small incident at the hospital. Since then, only Ratio and Three have went to see Art. Ratio had easily snuck in being a doctor himself, though when he returned, he had reported that Art seemed reluctant to see him even for the few minutes that he did. Three had gone yesterday, dropping off a manga for Art to read while he was awake. He imagined it would give something for Art to do, and maybe help him find some comfort in the words like he had, though even he sensed the uneasiness in Art's eyes as well.

"Why don't you go see him, Nice?" Koneko suggested, trying just like everyone else to lift the other's spirits up.

Nice shook his head in disagreement. Art didn't want to see him. Those violet eyes pierced through him when he had verbally ushered him out of the room. There was no twisting his words; the message was clear. Art did not want him there, and so Nice would respect that decision even if the mystery behind the request kept Nice moping around the bar.

"No?" Koneko questioned, "Hm, then what about a case?" she dangled the document in front of Nice's face, "Some fresh air could do you

some good, don't you agree, Murasaki?"

Said man averted his eyes from his book before nodding in agreement. He made note of what page he was on before shutting it and tucking it underneath his arm.

"Let's go, Nice." He pulled the other off the stool by the hood of the other's sweatshirt, "We still have jobs to do."

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Violet eyes surveyed the open palm of his pale hands, turning them over a few times. There was no difference. No difference in appearance or feelingâ€|then why did he feel as though there was? There was something not right. There was something he could only define as sinful, wrong, evil. His hands that he once believed were made to help people were now only weapons of destruction. He could not trust them nor the rest of his body. Who knew what he was now capable of?

He shook his head, trying to dispel such thoughts only to his raise his hand to sooth the sudden pain he had inflicted upon himself.

'\_Painâ€|is that all I will ever feel?\_' A crooked smile crept upon the superintendent's features. '\_It's what I deserve, isn't it?\_' It's all he ever deserved starting from the loss of his brother. He had failed him. Where he was now and what he had let Moral do to him was evidence enough. Now this was his payment; his divine punishment.

An unsoundly laugh rippled through him, bubbling inside his chest before he could not restrain it anymore. He laughed. He laughed at his fortune, his life, and at his naÃ¬ve dreams he once held. How could he have thought he could ever protect his friends? He once believed a minimum could, though he should have known that he couldn't for even his own minimum couldn't. His own minimum was broken, nonexistent, and now that he had oneâ€|

'\_Isn't this what I always wanted?\_' \_"Well isn't it?" He nearly yelled at himself, causing the maniacal laughter to slowly die for all that escaped him where choked sobs. "Noâ€|" his estranged hands came up to cover his eyes as if it they could seal away the tears, the ache that throbbed against his ribcage.

'\_No this is not what I wanted.'\_ "I'm a monsterâ€|" He told himself, \_'And what good could a monster be?\_'\_

It was sometime before the tears dried up, though his eyes were slightly swollen as the redness was still visible against his deathly pale skin. They still stung of salt, but there was nothing to do for that. Instead he tried to focus on the manga Three had thoughtfully given him, and because it was the only reading material he had at the moment.

Gasquet had outright refused to let Art near any type of police work and Art was thankful yet annoyed by the action. However, he understood Gasquet was looking out for him. Almost like a father or an uncle would do and since Art had neither he appreciated

Gasquetâ€|though not at the very moment.

Art would admit that the cover of the manga didn't intrigue him at first, though it did cause some color to reach his cheeks when it was evident that the manga was shounen-ai. It wasn't that Art was turned off by such things, it's justâ€|he never did read such books. He didn't even touch those magazines he knew some of his peers hid under their beds.

Nonetheless, Art had nothing else to do and so he began to read through the manga. He was halfway through when there was a knock on his door and he swiftly stashed the manga away, taking note of what page he was on when the door opened.

A blond brow rose questioningly when he saw Art hide something away, though it did not stop him entering and placing the tray of hospital food upon the side table. "Amusing yourself?"

"No, I was justâ€|" violet eyes averted from the stranger, thinking him only as another nurse coming to check in on him.

"Don't look so guilty, Art. Geez." Art swiftly looked back up when the spiky blonde hair was revealed by the removal of his cap and a broad sanguine smile.

"Oh, Birthday, I'm sorry. I didn't know you were coming."

"Yeah, well I had to get the scrubs from this very obliging nurse before I could sneak in here, but what's up?" The man plopped down in the chair beside the bed. He had noticed Art's slightly red rimmed eyes which for some reason sparked a bit of annoyance.

Art didn't know how to quite respond to Birthday's short tale of how he had snuck in here, nor did he really know how to respond to the question other than, "I'm fine, thank you. How are the others?"

"Fine." Birthday replied a bit stiffly thinking that Art wouldn't have to ask how the others were doing if he hadn't push them away. He folded his arms across his chest while he tilted his head as if wondering if he had changed the angle at which he saw Art then maybe he could catch a glimpse of the man he knew and not this stranger before him.

They had lapsed in an uneasy silence, Art shifting slightly under Birthday's scrutinizing gaze. "Is there something the matter?" Art finally managed the courage to ask.

"I don't know, is there?" irritation was evident in Birthday's tone which startled Art at first, but he held his ground against, Birthday.

"I think you should go." Art averted his gaze down to his folded hands.

"I think I should too." Birthday replied sardonically as he pushed himself up from the chair and began to depart.

"Thank you for coming." Art hadn't forgotten his manners, but for some reason, the other's words had set Birthday off. He whirled back

around, facing the superintendent with vexing eyes.

"Oh save the damn formalities with me, Art. We know too much of each other to do that, and yet there you are sitting there like a man I just met on the street." Birthday's finger pointed accusingly at Art, as if lightening would shoot from the appendage to strike sense back into the superintendent. Meanwhile Art sat frozen upon the bed, never having been yelled at before like this. At those large unblinking violet eyes, Birthday let his hand drop and stuffed them back in his pocket before letting out an indignant huff.

"Tch, what have you turned yourself into, Art? I hate it." Violet eyes swiftly diverted from the other minimum holder, refusing to show how much the words had hurt him. He would rather be electrified by Birthday than this.

Art looking away only seemed to fuel Birthday's anger even more as he advanced on the superintendent, "Don't you dare look away, Art. Don't you look away for a second." Birthday's hands gripped Art's shoulders to direct the other to look back at him, though all he saw was the fear in those violet eyes once more.

"I've read the reports, I've talked to Ratio, and yes you're alive, Art. Can't you see; you're Alive! And yet when I look at you, all I see is this self-loathing; this pathetic self-pity. Snap out of it! I hate it. Just live, Art, liâ€œ"

Art was breathing hard, hand still suspended in the air as his vexed eyes narrowed down on Birthday until he realized what he had just done. "I-I'm so sorry. Birthday, are you alright? Birthday?"

Birthday held his hand up as a sign for Art to very kindly shut-up. His hand came to lightly rub the sore cheek, as he opened and closed his mouth to make sure his jaw still functioned.

"Tch," A bitter smile slashed across Birthday's features, "You know what I hate the most, Art? It's not just the pity party, but this. You're pushing me away, Art, and not only me but Nice as well. Someone you considered your friend. Well I hate to break it to you but friends don't treat each other like this. They just don't."

Birthday stood up, eyes holding Art's to make sure the other heard him. "You know I almost died once. I lived with people telling me that I was going to die, even Ratio believed so until I did the impossible right here in this very hospital. I survived when no one else believed I could, and because I'm alive, I keep on living. So don't you dare think you are better off dead, Art. You're alive for a reason and if you think you deserve to be dead, then start proving yourself wrong by living."

Art could only stare at Birthday for some time, letting the other's words settle while Birthday placed back on his disguise to leave, though before he could Art stopped him.

"Thank youâ€œ|Birthday. Iâ€œ|I needed that." Blond brows rose at the other's change of demeanor. He could see the guilt in Art's eyes where there was once self-pity. A small smile crossed his features, glad that Art had listened.



"You know, it's never too late to apologize. I mean, I don't do it, but that's what I've heard."

Art couldn't help but return the smile. It was the first genuine smile in a while, "I'm sorry that I hit you, Birthday."

"No, not me, I meant Nice. Kid's been moping around for the past few days."

"Ohâ€|" Art's smile had visibly fallen as Birthday returned to Art's side to place a hand on the man's shoulder, though gentler this time than the last.

"Just call him, Art. Even if it's just a short conversation. I'm sure that would set him at ease, promise?"

A small doubtful smile found its way to Art's lips, "I'd be surprised if he talked to me."

"He will, and I'm not forgiving you for hitting me until you call him."

"Alright," Art relented, "I promise."

"Thanks." Birthday gave a departing pat to Art's shoulder, "Well I'll see you around then, Art. Take care."

"You too." Art watched as Birthday left, leaving him to his own devices once more. Birthday's words continued to run through his head as for the first time he felt hopeful. 'Maybeâ€|maybe my body isn't made for minimums.' Art thought to himself. After all, it had been a few days and no one had dropped dead. It couldn't hurt to call Nice, right?

Violet eyes looked up to check the time before he decided that he should probably call soon since Birthday would probably ask Nice as soon as he saw him. After half an hour of convincing himself that everything would be fine, Art picked up the hospital phone and dialed the number he knew by heart.

TBCâ€|

\*\*A/N: So I hope I didn't make Birthday OCC here. I know he's sort of a happy-go-lucky character but I also believe he's not afraid to call people out like he did with Ratio. With that said, I hope you enjoyed this and I hope to update soon as well. Thanks for reading and goodnight/morning and everything in between. \*\*

### 3. Chapter 3:Chaos

\*\*A/N: Look at this! I unwisely pulled an all-nighter for this, but I shall pay the consequences whatever they may be later. On a separate note, thank you for all the lovely reviews, favs, and alerts. They really kept me going with this whenever I felt stuck so thanks for that. Uh, my apologies are on the bottom soâ€|on ward to the chapter!\*\*

\*\*P.S. Longest chapter yet! \*Pat on the back\* \*Sigh\* I need to go to

bed... Oh and I need to edit these chapters. I don't have a beta so I proof read these myself, but it's much harder proofing your own work since you fly right through it. If you catch any typo or whatever in here, please let me know. It would be much appreciated. Thanks!

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### \*\*Chapter 3: Chaos\*\*

"What was that about?"

"Moral." The detective simply answered only to be met with a pale raised brow. "With how his crimes work, he would need someone good with computers, a hacker of some sort." Nice elaborated for his partner who silently nodded to the new information. Nice always seemed to fit the puzzle pieces together faster than him, which used to aggravate him and sometimes still did, but he was more used to it now. However, such thoughts dissipated when he caught his partner's blue eyes staring off at something. When he followed his line of sight, he let out a soft sympathetic sigh.

"You can get him some flowers if you'd like, Nice."

"No," Nice shook his head, "he wouldn't like them. Let's just go, Murasaki."

Nice turned to head towards the car. He hopped into the passenger side while his partner took the driver's side, hands gripping the steering wheel a bit harder than needed. It was the only thing he could do to keep himself from knocking some sense into Nice or even Art for that matter. More so Art than Nice. He knew why Nice was upset, everyone knew, but no one could understand Art.

The superintendent was usually calm and soft spoken. He had only lashed out once and that was at Nice which he figured was because the other man had crossed the line. Other than that, Art was the least of them to be unpleasant, or unkind in any way, yet he had begun to distance himself. Murasaki could only deduce it was because of the incident which landed Art in the hospital, but even that remained a mystery.

'\_Ring, ring...ring, ring'\_ Nice felt his pockets, in search for his phone before his fingers found purchase around the object. Blue eyes widened when he recognized the number to be that of the hospitable, instantly thinking the worst when he answered.

"Hey, is everything alright? Is Art alright?" the questions rapidly flew as Nice had to bite down upon his own finger to silence himself. The person on the other line would never be able to get a word in if he didn't.

At the sudden assault of questions, the person on the other end had stilled, prepared words instantly thrown into oblivion by the guilt that began to build within him once more. He swiftly went to slam the phone down when his own alienable hand had betrayed him or perhaps it was the only part of him that remained true to him.

"Hello? Is anyone there?" \_'Pleaseâ€¦someone say something.'\_

At the sound of the other's voice calling out to him, he could no longer take it as he placed the receiver by his ear once

more.

"â€|Yes, I'm sorryâ€|I'm here."

"Art?" Nice couldn't be sure for the voice on the other line was too faint to comprehend, as he wondered if it was only his mind tricking him once more.

"Yesâ€|Iâ€|is this a bad time?"

"No!" at the sudden yell, Murasaki decided to pull over, fearing if he didn't neither of them would be able to hear the end of the call.

"I mean, no, I'm not busy." Nice got out of the car while Murasaki waited inside to give Nice his privacy. "What's up? Are you okay? Everything alright?"

A broken smile crossed the other's features at the sound of worry in Nice's voice. Still, after everything he had done to the detective he never seemed to hold it against him. Some part of him was thankful for it while another part was a little annoyed. Nice had every reason to be mad at him, but he remained true to his name.

'\_Nice, is that all that you are?\_' Art shook his head lightly, \_'You're too nice, especially to me.'\_

"I'm fine." Art replied after some time.

"Good. I-I mean that's good."

"Nice?"

"Yes?" Nice bit the inside of his cheek, keeping his mouth shut to allow Art to speak.

"I called because Iâ€|I'm sorry. I shouldn't have yelled at youâ€|twice now."

"No, that's fine." A big smile began to form across Nice's lips as his relief was evident in his tone. "It was my fault. I'mâ€|"

"Nice," Art interjected, "please don't apologize."

"Okay, sorry â€" I meanâ€|" Nice bit down upon his own finger once more to keep his traitorous tongue at bay. The desire to ram his foot against one of the tires crossed his mind, though Art's words held his foot back.

"â€|Are you okay?"

"Yes, yeah, I'm fine. Just working on cases as usual."

Art silently nodded though he couldn't help but let another crooked smile slip upon his lips. He could imagine the other man trying to sound okay on his behalf while internally he was churning in utter turmoil. The thought of it caused the smile to grow bittersweet as he himself was being torn.

Meanwhile, a pregnant silence fell upon them as both subconsciously pressed the receiver closer to their ears in fear that perhaps they had missed each other's words. Or more so in hope that the other would break the deafening silence first.

At last Art was the first to capitulate, releasing a weary sigh, "I'm glad you're okay, Niceâ€¦I suppose I'll talk to you later then."

"Yeah, that sounds great. Maybe I'll stop by sometime soon."

"Oh, well I should be released soon."

"What day?"

Art mentally cursed not only himself for lying but also Nice's incessant concern, "â€¦Sunday."

"Do you need help?"

"No thank you, I should be fine." Art assured, praying that Nice would just hang up.

"Oh, alright. I'll see you another time then. Take care of yourself, Art."

'\_You first.'\_ Art bit his bottom lip, holding back the biting words, "I will."

Blue eyes blinked in surprise to the abrupt click of the line being cut. He swiftly scanned the screen of his phone to make sure that Art had really hung up on him only to see the words 'Call Ended' slashed across the red background. Dark brows furrowed in bewilderment as he ran the call through his head once more. Had Art really forgiven him?

"Too soon."

Nice glanced back at his partner, momentarily forgetting where he was at the moment, "Too soon?"

"Too soon." Murasaki repeated, "You shouldn't invite yourself if the problem was derived from you doing so in the first place."

"Rightâ€¦" Nice mentally cursed himself, though he tried not to dwell on the subject any further. Art was physically well for the most part, as he couldn't help the other if he was not emotionally well. And even though it pained him to remember the fear in those eyes, he could not bring himself to ask what Art feared. Murasaki was right. If he wanted to help Art, he needed Art to come to him. He could not force his way in as usual.

"Can you drop me off at the cemetery?"

"The cemetery?" A questioning pale brow rose.

"Yeah," Nice nodded in confirmation, saying nothing more as he made his way back to the car only for his hand to freeze upon the handle. "Never mind, I'll walk."

"Yeah, I could use the fresh air." Nice insisted, waving his partner off.

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"Nothing much." Birthday relented, "We had a nice chat, I got to talk to some nurses, eat some pudding, you know. The usual."

"What are you up to? Don't tell me you've been reading all day." Birthday's sudden inquiring dashed away Ratio's current thoughts in favor of peering over at the man across from him idly play with the salt shaker.

"Not all day." Ratio snatched the object away before Birthday could make a mess.

"Then read to me." Birthday wasn't deterred the slightest when Ratio had taken the shaker away but instead moved to sit beside the other and rest his sore cheek upon the doctor's shoulder. Having spent every day with Birthday, or mostly every day, he was far too used to the man's antics to be shy by close proximities.

"Are you sure you want to learn about the liver?"

"Hm," Birthday hummed, both of them knowing fully well that Birthday never actually paid attention to what Ratio was reading but more so he just liked to dispel the silence by listening to the doctor's voice.

"Very well." Ratio cleared his throat before beginning to read the medical journal aloud to his friend. It wasn't long until the weight upon his shoulder grew heavier with each passing sentence. After a

few more moments, Ratio spared a look over to his friend only to find the man asleep.

A soft sigh was released before he stopped reading aloud now that Birthday had fallen asleep upon his shoulder. The sigh might have been interrupted as an act of annoyance, but Ratio would be lying if he said he did not enjoy these moments no matter how small or insignificant they might seem from a bystander's point of view. To him they were reassuring.

The feeling of the man's physical weight upon his shoulder only solidified the metaphorical weight he felt of responsibility. Ever since Birthday had killed the prophet within him, Ratio had made it his obligation that the prophet remained dead by keeping Birthday alive. Without Birthday, he would once more be the prophet with only his morbid predictions as company.

"Ratio, Birthday the police department is on the line." Koneko had come down to tell them, only to fall short at the sight of the weary Birthday, though the moment was short lived. It only took a small jab to the rib by a certain elbow for Birthday to shoot up, shades slightly askew and eyes alert.

"Huh? What? I'm up!"

"We have a call." Ratio bluntly replied. "I'll take it."

"Yeah, you go do that. Tell them I said hi." Birthday fell back against the seat once Ratio had left, and catching a few more precious seconds of rest he could before Ratio would return with some job for them to do.

As predicted, Ratio returned a few minutes later with his car keys at hand, "Let's go, Birthday. Crisis has struck in the down town area."

"Of course itâ€¦wait, really?" Birthday sat up, intrigued now and wide awake. "Let's go then."

Without further ceremony, Birthday sprang up and followed Ratio out to whatever chaos was apparently running rampant through the streets of Yokohama.

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He had lied. He had lied to his friend, and though he had withheld the truth from Nice before there was a clear difference between lying and simply staying silent. And though the lie was small, it was still a lie nonetheless and something else to apologize for later if he could ever bring himself to do so.

The superintendent shook his head lightly at the thought of it. He had been having to apologize more often lately. The thought irked him, though what aggravated him even more was when people had let it go. Just like that. Without any repercussion whatsoever.

'\_How can you be so forgiving?\_' Art thought to himself. '\_How can you so easily just smile and brush it off?\_' \_"Is it really that easy?"

'\_No,'\_ pale hands bunched in the sheets beneath him. It couldn't be that easy. It simply couldn't. What he had done was wrong as it seemed to be the case with many things. It was always a struggle. A constant rise and fall as he could feel himself plummeting with no end at sight.

'\_How is it so easy for you?'\_ Art's smile seemed to grow sickly wider. "Oh yes, how could I forget?" \_'It's because you're Nice. You're too nice.'\_

Art's smile fell to the sudden thoughts brewing within his mind. That couldn't possibly be him. Nice was his friend. He couldn't â€" he wouldn't â€"

'\_Oh yes you would.' \_

"Noâ€|"

'\_Don't be naï-ve. You hate him; you've always hated him.'\_

"Stopâ€|"

'\_Stop what? I'm you after all. If you want to stop, then stop yourself.'\_

"Silence!"

'Crash!' Violet eyes swiftly glanced over, seeing the forgotten tray of food had suddenly toppled to the ground, cold food splattered across the floor. Pale brows furrowed in bewilderment, wondering how it could have fallen since he didn't recall touching it. His hands were too tightly wound within his sheets to touch anything else unless he had absentmindedly lashed out in his momentary fit.

'Whoosh.' Art's head spun around to his manga, having been beside his bed now upon the floor as well, though before he could even question it, his head spun around once more as more things began to unexpectedly topple over.

'\_Clankâ€|bamâ€|zoomâ€|slamâ€|thunkâ€|'\_

Violet eyes grew wider to the sudden objects of the room flying through the air, sliding, and some even colliding against one another. No, this couldn't be happening. Violet eyes squeezed shut, vainly trying to will away the chaos surrounding him.

'\_Stop, this can't be it. This can't be the minimum.'\_

'\_Oh but it is. Embrace it, love it, use it before it uses you.'\_

"No! Get out of my head!"

'Wham!'

\\|/\\|/\\|/

Ratio pulled over, as Birthday was the first to hop out having spotted the group first.

"I woke up for a bunch of kids, tch." Shaded eyes glanced from one face to another, seeing anxious faces looking back at him except for one. "You must be the leader, you first." Birthday declared, snatching his Taser from his back pocket. The sparks glowed ominously as he could feeling the small vibrations running up his arm, though the light tingly feeling that usually followed did not.

'That's odd.' Birthday thought, though he remained calm nonetheless, simply writing it off as nothing.

"You're a minimum holder?"

"And what's it to you if I am?"

"What side are you on?" Another called out. "Are you with them, or with us?"

Birthday followed their line of sight, seeing three strangers tied with their backs up against a tree and slanders riddled across their heads. On the other hand, Ratio noted the condition in which they were in, roughly diagnosing their premeditated injuries they had received.

However, Ratio's attention swiftly averted to his partner having heard the uproarious laughter spilling through the electrifying man.

"Sides? Since when has humanity ever had sides so black and white?" Birthday questioned, laughter slowly dying out before his blue eyes narrowed dangerously behind his shades. "I am human as are all of you. Whether I have a minimum or not does not change that fact."

"You are naïve to think the world is not covered in black." One spoke up, the one Birthday had addressed as the leader. "It is drenched in black with people like them. Us on the other hand can change that. We were given minimums, miracles, things that can change the world. So why let the weak stop us?"

"Don't make me laugh again, for you are just as black as you claim them to be if not more." Birthday's Taser glowed once more as if reflecting the blond man's temperament. "So to answer your question what side, if we are truly different, then I'm not on your side. A side of fools."

"Isn't that a shame?"

"Fools?" another indignantly stepped forth, "We shall make examples of you; show the world who are the true fools."

With that the man raised a deflated ball before him, getting ready to blow air through it while Ratio removed his gloves to reveal his golden arms. A broad smile struck across Birthday's features in anticipation, raising his Taser to his lips and biting down upon the electric current.

Hidden blue eyes abruptly shot open as his muscles seized, clenching



painfully to the bone as if they were clinging on to dear life. Nerves burned in confusion, panicking at the gnarled mesh of messages his brain tried to send. Before he knew it, he felt his knees give and his body lurching forward.

"Birthday!"

TBCâ€|

\*\*A/N: I apologize for the cruel cliff hanger, though I'm sorrier about the fact that I probably won't be able to update this for maybe about two months? I'll try to, but I have AP exams to study for and a bunch of other things on my plate at the moment so I apologize in advance. With that being said, I hope you liked this chapter nonetheless and I hope to see you all sooner than I expect. Thanks for reading, and goodnight/morning and everything in between.

\*\*

End  
file.